



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

Sacramento District  
1325 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

# Public Notice

Number: 200500350

Date: February 13, 2006

Comments Due: March 15, 2006

**Subject:** The Reno Regulatory Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application submitted by Lennar Homes to construct a housing development which would result in impacts to Steamboat Creek, its tributaries and adjacent wetlands. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

**Authority:** This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

**Applicant:** Lennar Homes  
10315 Professional Circle, Suite 110  
Reno, Nevada 89521-4803  
Phone: 775-825-7733 (Pam Parenti)

**Location:** The project site is located in Reno in Sections 28, 33, And 34, Township 19 North, Range 20 East, Washoe County, Nevada, on the Steamboat Creek USGS Topographic Quadrangle.

**Project Description:** The applicant is proposing to place fill material in Steamboat Creek and its adjacent wetland, Thomas Creek (Alexander Lake Ditch), its tributary, and their adjacent wetlands (see attached Sheet 2 of 7). These impacts are related to a housing development project, called Butler Ranch North. Additionally, about 7440 feet of Steamboat Creek will be moved and enhanced which will impact the current condition.

A major roadway, Veterans Way (formerly called the Tahoe Pyramid link and Pioneer Parkway), will be constructed in a north-south alignment along the eastern half of the project site (see attached Sheets 2 & 3 of 7). The southern portion of the roadway and housing developments to the west of the roadway will fill about 5.5 acres of a large wetland on the project site and be west of the current creek location (see attached map on Sheet 2 of 7). The northern fourth of the roadway will be placed over the existing Steamboat Creek. This segment of creek will be moved to the west of the proposed roadway, thus there will need to be a culverted road crossing across the creek as Steamboat Creek transitions from the being on the east side of the roadway to being on the west side of the roadway. Steamboat Creek will then enter the off-project detention basin located in the area between the north portion of the project site and Mira Loma Drive (see attached map on Sheet 3 of 7). The fill material to construct the roadway will come, in large part, from excavating the new creek alignment and the creating adjacent wetlands and riparian areas (see below).

Approximately 5000 feet of the other major tributary on the project site, Thomas Creek / Alexander Lake Ditch, will be completely filled to accommodate the proposed housing development except for that portion of the waterway that borders the northern portion of the project site. Two small wetlands adjacent to Thomas Creek, 0.36 acres, along the northern border of the development; approximately 536 feet of an unnamed tributary to Thomas Creek; and another smaller wetland adjacent to the unnamed tributary (0.04 acres) on the far southwestern portion of the project site will be filled to accommodate the housing development. The source of water from this unnamed tributary and its adjacent wetland originates from off-site springs. The spring water will be culverted and directed into Steamboat Creek. Other spring sources located on the southwestern portion of the project site will also be directed into Steamboat Creek via culverts. Water that used to flow into Thomas Creek will be diverted into Steamboat Creek at the southern end of the project (see attached detail on Sheets 3 & 4 of 7).

As shown on the attached map (Sheet 3 of 7), a large detention basin will be constructed along and adjacent to the east side of nearly half of the new roadway. This detention basin will capture and pre-treat runoff from the roadway and the housing developments before water enters Steamboat Creek.

The applicant is also proposing creek enhancement work. In the southern three-fourths of the project site (south of the culverted / bridged crossing over the creek), the existing creek is proposed to be moved slightly to the west of its current alignment. A typical cross section of the re-constructed creek is shown on the attached maps (Sheets 4-7 of 7). The realignment of the northern fourth of the creek is described above.

On the southern three fourths of the project site, the floodway conveyance channel for Steamboat Creek and the creek restoration work will be located between the new roadway on the west and hills on the east. On the northern fourth of the project (north of the culverted road crossing across the realigned Steamboat Creek), the flood conveyance channel will be between the proposed development and Herons Landing subdivision on the west and the roadway on the east, including the Mira Loma Drive detention basin (see attached map on Sheets 3 & 6 of 7).

The attached drawings provide additional project details.

**Project Location:** The project is located in Sections 28, 33, & 34, Township 19 North, Range 20 East, Washoe County, Nevada on the Steamboat USGS topographic quadrangle map.

**Environmental Setting:** The Butler Ranch is a large 1700-acre ranch that contains Steamboat Creek and impounded water from Thomas Creek (Alexander Lake) from which Thomas Creek / Alexander Lake Ditch flows thru the northern third of the ranch. Water from both these creeks have irrigated the ranch for many decades. The Butlers have owned the ranch since the 1940's. The northern third of the ranch, that affected by the proposed development, is mostly an artificially maintained forage grass pasture for livestock grazing with some remnant big sagebrush and non-native perennial peppergrass (tall whitetop). The overall terrain is flat to gentle slopes, with a steep hill formation on the east and southwest sides of the ranch. Several years of prolonged irrigation have radically altered the historic condition of the flatter portions of the ranch.

**Mitigation:** The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. In an anticipation of an affirmative permit decision and the likely need to provide compensatory mitigation, the applicant has proposed to construct / create 34 acres of wetland adjacent to the realigned creek (see typical cross section on attached map Sheet 7 of 7). This compensatory mitigation action will impact the remainder of the 13.45 acre wetland, of which 5.5 acres are proposed to be impacted by the roadway and houses. In addition to the 34 acres of created wetlands adjacent to the realigned Steamboat Creek, over 12 acres of created riparian habitat will be constructed adjacent to the wetlands.

**Water Quality Certification:** Water quality certification or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, is required for this project.

**Historic Properties:** Based on the available information (including applicant's cultural resources report), potentially eligible cultural resources may be affected by the proposed project. The Corps has initiated consultation with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) under Section 106 of the National Preservation Act.

**Endangered Species:** Based on the Corps' preliminary review, the proposed project will not affect any Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or critical habitat that is protected by the Endangered Species Act.

**Evaluation Factors:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

**Submitting Comments or Additional Information:** The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you need additional information or have questions, please contact the project manager, listed below. You may also contact the applicant. Written comments, referencing Corps Number 200500350, must be submitted on or before the Comments Due date at the top of this notice to:

Richard Gebhart, Project Manager  
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District  
Reno Regulatory Office  
300 Booth Street, Room 2103  
Reno, Nevada 89509-1361  
Email: [richard.a.gebhart@usace.army.mil](mailto:richard.a.gebhart@usace.army.mil)  
Phone: 775-784-5307

**Public Hearing:** Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location.

Attachments